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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0131  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 08873

TERREP EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PTER NL  
SUBJECT: ABU NIDAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

REF: (A) STATE 371962, (B) STATE 371963,

¶1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT.)

¶2. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS DISCUSSED ISSUE OF ABU NIDAL TERRORISM (REFTELS) WITH APPROPRIATE MFA OFFICIALS. THE INITIAL MFA RESPONSE INDICATED THE DUTCH RECOGNIZE THE DANGER OF ABU NIDAL GROUP AND ARE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN A "POLITICAL DIALOGUE" WITH THE US AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE JOINT ACTION. NONETHELESS, THERE IS NO CLEAR IDEA WITHIN THE MINISTRY AS TO HOW SUCH A DIALOGUE MIGHT BE STRUCTURED AND WHAT CHANNELS OF COORDINATION WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE. THE DUTCH ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR DEMARCHE TO PASS ON INFORMATION CONCERNING A POSSIBLE AMAL TERRORIST ACTION WHICH THE MFA RECEIVED CONFIDENTIALLY FROM TWO LIBYAN GOVERNMENT SOURCES. END SUMMARY.

¶3. AMBASSADOR RAISED ISSUE OF ABU NIDAL TERRORISM (REFTELS) WITH MFA DIRECTOR FOR MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA AFFAIRS JAN HORAK AND EMBASSY OFFICER FOLLOWED UP IN GREATER DETAIL WITH AREND HUITZING, HEAD, MFA MIDDLE EAST OFFICE, AND JOOP VAN BOSSE, HEAD, NORTH AFRICA OFFICE. WE EXPLAINED USG INTEREST IN INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST ABU NIDAL, DRAWING ON POINTS REF A, AND PROVIDED MFA WITH US INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT ON THE SUBJECT (REF B). WE ARE ALSO PROVIDING INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT TO DUTCH INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES VIA SIRO LIAISON CHANNELS.

¶4. HUITZING AND VAN BOSSE INDICATED THAT GON IS CONCERNED ABOUT ABU NIDAL ORGANIZATION, WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR BOMBING OF AN EL AL OFFICE IN AMSTERDAM IN SEPTEMBER. HUITZING NOTED THAT NETHERLANDS AND US ARE ALREADY EXCHANGING INFORMATION ON TERRORISM THROUGH APPROPRIATE CHANNELS AND HE DOUBTS THERE WAS MUCH NEW THE DUTCH COULD OFFER IN THIS AREA. HE DID THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR A "POLITICAL DIALOGUE" BETWEEN THE US AND CONCERNED EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO SEE WHAT CONCRETE DIPLOMATIC SECURITY MEASURES WE COULD JOINTLY TAKE TO DEAL WITH THE ABU NIDAL THREAT.

¶5. WE ASKED HUITZING AND VAN BOSSE IF THEY HAD ANY SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE BEST FORUM FOR SUCH A DIALOGUE. THE TWO MEN DISAGREED IN THEIR RESPONSES. HUITZING FAVORED DEALING WITH THE ISSUE AT NATO, WHILE VAN BOSSE THOUGHT A US DIALOGUE WITH THE EC "TREVI" GROUP DEALING WITH TERRORISM MIGHT BE BETTER. HUITZING'S PREFERENCE FOR NATO SEEMED BASED ON HIS DESIRE TO GIVE PREEMINENCE TO THE POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC ASPECTS OF SUCH A DIALOGUE, WHILE VAN BOSSE FELT THE TREVI GROUP COULD BETTER DEAL WITH THE LAW ENFORCEMENT SIDE OF THE TERRORISM ISSUE. BOTH MEN AGREED THE MFA LACKS A CLEAR POINT OF CONTACT FOR COORDINATING TERRORISM POLICY COMPARABLE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S M/CT.

¶6. WE ALSO ASKED VAN BOSSE ABOUT INFORMATION PROVIDED

TO US THAT A NUMBER OF DUTCH TRAVELING TO LIBYA HAD TWO PASSPORTS, ONE OF WHICH WAS OFTEN SEIZED BY LIBYAN AUTHORITIES. VAN BOSSE CLARIFIED THAT SUCH SEIZURES USUALLY ONLY OCCUR WHEN THE LIBYANS HAVE AN UNRESOLVED COMMERCIAL OR FINANCIAL CLAIM AGAINST THE DUTCH CITIZEN IN QUESTION. THE PASSPORTS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS RETURNED EVENTUALLY BY THE LIBYANS, VAN BOSSE SAID, AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THEY HAVE BEEN USED TO FACILITATE ILLEGAL TRAVEL BY TERRORISTS. HUITZING NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE FAR EASIER FOR THE LIBYANS TO OBTAIN DUTCH PASSPORTS ON THE "BLACK MARKET" FROM AMONG PASSPORTS REPORTED LOST OR STOLEN WITHIN THE NETHERLANDS THAN TO ATTEMPT TO USE ONE OF THE FEW SEIZED DIRECTLY BY THEIR AUTHORITIES, SINCE THE DUTCH KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THOSE PASSPORTS AND WOULD BE AWARE IMMEDIATELY OF LIBYAN INVOLVEMENT IF THEY SHOWED UP IN THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS.

¶ 7. VAN BOSSE ALSO USED THE OPPORTUNITY OF OUR DEMARCHE TO PASS TO US INFORMATION RECEIVED IN CONFIDENCE FROM TWO DIFFERENT LIBYAN DIPLOMATS REGARDING POSSIBLE TERRORIST ACTIVITY. VAN BOSSE SAID THE DUTCH EMBASSY IN TRIPOLI HAD BEEN TOLD IN JULY THAT THE AMAL GROUP IN LEBANON WAS PLANNING A POSSIBLE AIR HIJACKING OF A DUTCH AND/OR LIBYAN AIRCRAFT. ACCORDING TO THE LIBYAN SOURCES, THE TERRORISTS WOULD BE USING FORGED LEBANESE OR LIBYAN PASSPORTS. VAN BOSSE ADMITTED THE INFORMATION WAS RATHER DATED, BUT HE PRESENTED IT TO US TO underscore THE DUTCH MFA ARGUMENT THAT MAINTAINING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH LIBYA CAN OCCASIONALLY YIELD VALUABLE INFORMATION OF USE TO THE WEST'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT TERRORISM.

¶ 8. VAN BOSSE AND HUITZING CONCLUDED BY SAYING THEY WOULD BRING OUR DEMARCHE ON ABU NIDAL TO THE ATTENTION OF SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH US IF THE MINISTRY HAD ANY ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON POSSIBLE FUTURE COOPERATION IN THIS AREA.

¶ 9. COMMENT: VAN BOSSE'S AND HUITZING'S READY UNDERSTANDING OF THE VALUE OF A STEPPED-UP WESTERN POLITICAL DIALOGUE ON TERRORISM IS ENCOURAGING. WE WILL BE FOLLOWING UP TO FOMENT SIMILAR UNDERSTANDING AT SENIOR MFA LEVELS. EVEN WITH SUCH UNDERSTANDING, HOWEVER, IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO TURN WESTERN DIALOGUE INTO OUR OBJECTIVE OF JOINT OR PARALLEL PRESSURES BY THE DUTCH UPON LIBYA AND SYRIA. WHAT WE NEED AS A FIRST STEP IS TO IDENTIFY A WESTERN FORUM FOR DIALOGUE WHERE WE COULD BUILD MOMENTUM FOR JOINT ACTION IN WHICH WE COULD CATCH UP THE DUTCH AND OTHERS.

BREMER